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Although the embodiment illustrated in Figures 3 to 14 demonstrates how a single receptacle 30 can be connected to another receptacle 30 on a temporary basis to allow for the propagation of a microorganism through growth medium, the invention also contemplates the arrangement illustrated in Figure 15. In that arrangement, a plurality of receptacles 30 of various lengths are connected together by means of collars 54, each receptacle 30 has an insert 40 as previously described and the end receptacles are closed by means of caps 36.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 2, 4, 6-14, 17-26, 28-31, 33-38, 40, and 41 as follows:

1. (Amended) A process for growing an organism, comprising:
providing a first vessel containing a first body of growth supporting material and causing the organism to grow in said material in said first vessel towards a first location;
providing a second vessel containing a second body of growth supporting material; and
permitting said organism to grow from the body of material in the first vessel into the body of material in the second vessel through said first location.
2. (Amended) A process according to claim 1, comprising connecting said second vessel to said first vessel and permitting said organism to grow into said second body of material while said vessels are connected together.

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4. (Amended) A process according to claim 2, comprising disconnecting said first vessel from said second vessel after said organism has begun to grow in said second body of material.
6. (Amended) A process according to claim 1 wherein said step of causing said organism to grow comprises causing said organism to grow in said first vessel and into said second vessel in a predetermined growing direction.
7. (Amended) A process according to claim 6 wherein said first and second vessels are, in the predetermined direction, of different lengths.
8. (Amended) A process according to claim 7 wherein said second vessel is shorter than said first vessel, said process further comprising removing said second vessel, after said step of permitting said organism to grow therein, for sub-sampling thereof.
9. (Amended) A process according to claim 1, comprising causing said organism to grow in said second body of material towards a second location therein, providing a third vessel containing a third body of growth supporting material and permitting said organism to grow from said second body of material into said third body of material through said second location.
10. (Amended) A process of storing a microorganism comprising the steps of:

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providing a growth medium;

growing a population of a microorganism on or in the growth medium; and

sampling said population for subculture,

wherein said step of sampling includes sampling across substantially the whole population of the microorganism.

11. (Amended) A process of storing a microorganism including the steps of:

providing a growth medium; and

causing a microorganism to grow on or in the growth medium, wherein said step of causing said organism to grow includes entraining said microorganism substantially in a predetermined direction.

12. (Amended) A process in accordance with claim 11 wherein said step of causing said organism to grow includes causing said organism to grow towards a predetermined location, and said process further comprising sampling at said predetermined location to obtain a sample of said organism across substantially the entire population thereof.

13. (Amended) A process in accordance with claim 12, wherein said sampling step includes the step of placing a sampling medium adjacent said predetermined location for continuing growth of said microorganism thereon or therein.

14. (Amended) A process of manufacturing a metabolite comprising the steps of:
storing a microorganism in accordance with the process of claim 11;

extracting a sample of said microorganism;
subjecting said sample to conditions suitable for metabolism; and
extracting metabolite from said sample.

17. (Amended) A storage device comprising a housing, growth medium within the housing, and first and second locations on the growth medium, such that a microorganism can be grown from the first location towards the second location where subculturing of substantially the entire population can be effected.

18. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 17, wherein the housing is tubular.

19. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 18, wherein the housing is cylindrical.

20. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 17 wherein the housing is of a sterilizable material.

21. A storage device in accordance with claim 17 wherein said housing has formations at said first and second locations of the growth medium each formation being suitable to engage with a cooperating formation of another of said storage device, for propagation of microorganism therebetween.

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22. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 17 wherein said housing comprises means for retaining said growth medium.

23. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 22 wherein said retaining means has at least one aperture defined therein for passage of microorganism therethrough.

24. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 23 wherein said retaining means comprises at least one retaining member across said retaining means.

25. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 24 wherein said retaining means comprises a reticular member across said retaining means.

26. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 17 wherein said growth medium comprises a natural foodstuff.

28. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 27 wherein said growth medium comprises a quantity of a cereal.

29. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 27 wherein said growth medium comprises a quantity of seed.

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30. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 27 wherein said growth medium comprises a quantity of a pulse.
31. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 27 wherein said growth medium comprises an agricultural crop byproduct.
33. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 26 wherein said growth medium comprises at least one of calcium sulphate, soy oil, yeast extract and peptone.
34. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 17 wherein said growth medium is sterile.
35. (Amended) A storage container for use in the storage device of claim 17, defining a cavity within which growth medium can be contained, said container comprising first and second access means between which growth medium can extend in use, for growth of an organism between said first and second access means in use.
36. (Amended) A container in accordance with claim 35 including first and second closure means, removably closing said access means in use.
37. (Amended) A storage device comprising:
growth medium for viably supporting a microorganism;

wherein said storage device includes a facility for presenting said population substantially in its entirety for subculture.

38. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 37 and further comprising a receptacle supporting the growth medium.

40. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 38, wherein the receptacle includes attachment means for attachment of said device to further culturing apparatus.

41. (Amended) A storage device in accordance with claim 40, wherein the attachment means is operable to engage the growth medium with growth medium of a further storage device.

REMARKS

The specification has been amended at page 27 to conform the specification to the drawings. The foregoing amendments to the claims have been made to conform them to customary U.S. practice.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the specification and claims by this Preliminary Amendment. The attachment is captioned "**APPENDIX TO PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT OF OCTOBER 31, 2001**" Deletions appear as normal text surrounded by [] and additions appear as underlined text.

If there is any fee due in connection with the filing of this Preliminary Amendment, please charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

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